DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 751 JC 980 214

AUTHOR	Smith, Mara Cooper
TITLE	The College Access, Retention and Employment (CARE) Program Model.
INSTITUTION	Miami-Dade Community Coll., FL. North Campus.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1998-08-00
NOTE	35p.
CONTRACT	H078C40006-95
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Civil Rights Legislation; *Community Colleges; *Disabilities; Models; Nontraditional Students; Program Improvement; School Holding Power; *Student Characteristics; *Student Personnel Services; Student Recruitment; Two Year College Students; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Miami Dade Community College FL

ABSTRACT

The College Access, Retention, and Employment (CARE) program was a 3-year initiative by Florida's Miami-Dade Community College. CARE was designed: to improve both the delivery and outcomes of postsecondary education for people with disabilities, with a special focus on minority groups, and to disseminate a model, describing the program, including its evaluation to public, urban postsecondary institutions in the United States. This booklet presents background information on and describes components of the CARE model. First, a chart of CARE program components and an introduction to issues related to educating people with disabilities are presented. Next, data are provided on the characteristics of students with disabilities nationwide and laws that ensure their civil rights are described. The first step in establishing a disabilities program, setting up an advisory board, is discussed and important elements in providing support services are reviewed, including establishing a Disabled Student Services Department, making note takers and readers available, providing test-taking accommodations, ensuring access to technology and the library, and providing advisement and tutorial services. Issues related to recruitment are then described, including information on working with high schools and community agencies; providing information to parents; and using videos, recruitment mailings, and the Internet. The next sections focus on making application/registration, advisement/counseling, financial aid, mentoring, and career exploration/job placement services accessible to people with disabilities. Tips for training faculty and staff are provided related to accommodating blind, deaf, physically impaired, and learning disabled students. Also, information on forming consortia and minority issues is included. A 19-item resource list is attached. (Contains 15 references.) (BCY)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 418 751

The College Access, Retention and Employment (CARE) Program Model

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. H. McCabe

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

VC 980 214

Miami Dade
North Campus

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The College Access, Retention and Employment (CARE) Program Model

Mara Cooper Smith, Program Coordinator
Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus
Office of Special Support Services
August 1997

Sponsored by a grant from the U.S.Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) #H078C40006-95

CONTENTS

CARE ABSTRACT 1
CARE MODEL 2
INTRODUCTION 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES 5
Figure 1 - Distribution of Students With Disabilities in Public Institutions of Higher Education 6
Table 1 - Percentage of College Students Reporting Disabilities By Type of Disability 7
Student Surveys 8
DISABILITY LAWS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS 9
The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Of 1990 9
Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 9
Section 504 Of The Rehabilitation Act Of 1973 10
The Educational Implications Of Section 504 10
THE FIRST STEP: SETTING UP AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE 12
MOVING FORWARD: PROVIDING SUPPORT SERVICES 13
A Disabled Student Services (DSS) Department 13
Shaping A DSS Department 13
Note Takers And Readers 14
Test-Taking Accommodations 15
Access Technology 15
Library Accessibility 16
Academic Advisement In The DSS Department 17
Tutorial Services 17
RECRUITMENT 19
Existing Recruitment Office 19
Transition Specialists In The Public School 19
College Assistance Programs In The High School 19
Provide Parents College Information 19
Social And Community Service Agencies 19
Videos 20
Recruitment Mailings 20
The Internet 20
APPLICATION / REGISTRATION 21
Specialized Orientation 21
Self Identification by Students with Disabilities 21
ADVISEMENT / COUNSELING 22
Ensuring Non-Restrictive Career Counseling 22
FINANCIAL AID 23
Disability Related Expenses 23
Special Funding Considerations 23
Plan For Achieving Self Support (PASS) 24
MENTORSHIP 24
CAREER EXPLORATION / JOB PLACEMENT 25
FACULTY AND STAFF TRAINING 26
Responsibilities Of Faculty 26
Suggested Accommodations:
Blind And Visually Impaired Students 27
Deaf And Hearing Impaired Students 27
Students With Physical Impairments 27
Learning Disabled Students 27
CONSORTIUM 28
MINORITY ISSUES 28
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 29
RESOURCES LIST 30
PRODUCTS PROVIDED BY CARE 30

ABSTRACT

The College Access, Retention and Employment C A R E program for students with disabilities was a three-year program, housed in the Special Support Service Department of Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus.

This program had two major goals. The first was to develop a demonstration model to improve the delivery and outcomes of postsecondary education for people with disabilities. Special focus was on individuals who were members of minority groups. The second goal was to disseminate a model, describing the program, including its evaluation to public, urban postsecondary institutions in the United States.

C A R E is a comprehensive, practical model, designed with consideration of decreasing funding for public education. The model provides effective strategies for tracking and monitoring students with disabilities through their community college experience, their transfer to universities and their eventual hiring/employment.

C A R E presents an opportunity to stem the disappointing retention and employment rates of students with disabilities by better understanding ways to improve success rates.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CARE MODEL

Intervention Group	Prior to Entry	Intake	Academic	Employment/Graduation
Faculty	Training:	Training:	Training:	
	Characteristics of students with disabilities	Disability Laws	Information on how to include students with disabilities in classroom activities	Relate curriculum to employment
	Disability Laws		How to use Assistive Technology in the classroom	
			Campus resources available to assist faculty with students with disabilities	
Staff:	Training:	Training:	Training:	
Registration	Characteristics of students with disabilities	Accommodations necessary to enroll	Campus resources available to assist staff with students with disabilities	Job shadowing Transfer information
Academic Advisors	Disability Laws	Knowledge of disability related financial resources		Summer Jobs
Financial Aid	Diversity Issues			Part-time employment
Career Exploration				Internships
Job Placement				Service Learning Opportunities
Community Service	Provide information:	Provide information:	Provide information:	
	Admissions/ Registrations	College procedures	College contact person	Student skills and interests
	Program completion information			
College Advisory Committee	Develop procedures to best mainstream students	Identify key personnel to coordinate these services	Determine best method for training faculty, staff and administrators	Develop strategies to improve articulation and placement rates
Post-Secondary Education Consortium	Share recruitment strategies between institutions	Develop strategies to improve recruitment	Share Assistive Technology resources and best practices for delivery of services	

C A R E

Intervention Group	Prior to Entry	Intake	Academic	Employment/Graduation
Disabled Student Services	Provide support services recruitment information	Determine eligibility for services	Resource for faculty/staff	Employment Counseling
			Counsel students on support services available	Provide disability related employment strategies
			Arrange accommodations	

S T U D E N T S

Intervention Group	Prior to Entry	Intake	Academic	Employment/Graduation
Students:	Recruitment	Application/ Registration	Advisement/ Counseling	Transfer information
High School Non-Traditional Agency Referrals Disenfranchised	Inclusion in mainstream recruitment activities	Specialized orientation	Career exploration	Job shadowing
	Reach out to parents in the schools utilizing a variety of media	Advisement/ Counseling Financial aid	Job placement	Summer jobs Part-time employment
				Internship
				Service Learning opportunities

INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities, like the elderly, are a growing segment of the American population. Today, advances in public health, medical treatment, and technology are enabling people to live longer lives, thereby increasing the likelihood they will develop disabilities. Premature infants and accident victims survive when once they would have died. Clearly, the increasing presence of people with disabilities, like the increasing proportion of elderly people, is a testament to the success of modern science.[1]

The most widely accepted estimate of the number of people with disabilities is 49 million non-institutionalized Americans (McNeil 1993). As such, people with disabilities constitute the single largest minority group identified in the United States, surpassing the elderly about 33.2 million, and African Americans about 32.7 million (Bureau of the Census 1995), and we can expect that these figures will increase as the baby boom generation ages. Unfortunately, Americans with disabilities find themselves at a disadvantage. As a group they are older, poorer, less educated and less employed than people without disabilities.

People with disabilities have a lower level of education than people without disabilities. While improvements in the last decade have been documented, a gap between people with and without disabilities remains in terms of both high school and college graduation. Although their numbers are increasing, few students with disabilities go on to postsecondary institutions. One study found that fewer than one-third of students with disabilities out of high school within three to five years enroll in postsecondary education programs. This figure is less than half the rate of general high school graduates (DOE 1993). Among people with disabilities, minorities are less educated than non-minorities. For example, while 30.7 percent of Whites with disabilities have less than a high school education, the figure for minorities is 43.3 (Yelin 1996).

In the face of diminished funding, educational institutions are struggling to provide appropriate support for students with disabilities. Over the past ten years, this problem has been compounded by the dramatic increase in the number of students with disabilities who have enrolled in colleges and universities across the country thanks to enhanced technology, increased medical knowledge, increased expectations of students with disabilities, and expanded support service programs. In this manner, students with disabilities have contributed to the atmosphere of diversity encouraged in postsecondary settings today.

The CARE program is an Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) grant housed at Miami-Dade Community College, North Campus. The model presented herein is a compilation of the CARE grant's work to improve services for students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions. The CARE model follows students throughout the postsecondary process.

CARE was designed to enhance existing programs and services to include students with disabilities. This goal was the cornerstone of the CARE grant. This strategy produced two positive results. First, the institution did not have to duplicate programs and services already available. Secondly, students benefited from participating in mainstream activities rather than being isolated in "special" programs.

Two major guiding principles are at the heart of the CARE program. The first relates to the need for postsecondary institutions to evaluate the services that they provide in order to determine if they are effective in meeting student and institutional needs. Such an evaluation can help determine if valuable financial resources are being spent in the most cost-effective manner. This is especially important in a controversial area of spending such as disabled student services. The second principle relates to institutionalizing changes. Institutions must make sure improvements made become a lasting part of the operat-

[1] Dart, Justin *Fallacy and Truth About the ADA*, (The Washington Post, 1995)

ing procedures and principles of the college or university. One of CARE's goals was to develop a demonstration model to improve the delivery and outcomes of post-secondary education for people with disabilities, with special focus on those who are also members of ethnic minority groups. To achieve this goal, CARE pursued the following objectives:

- Improving the utilization of existing college resources for college students with disabilities.
- Determining methods by which the college job placement center can be utilized by students with disabilities in a timely, cost-effective and relevant manner.
- Implementing a comprehensive approach for recruiting qualified students with disabilities into college academic programs.
- Developing a method by which faculty will become aware of college resources and effective strategies to instruct students who are disabled.
- Developing model agreements with selected industries, agencies and government employers to bring classroom accommodations into the job market in which students with disabilities and graduates will be employed.
- Increasing retention and placement of students with disabilities.
- Implementing a seamless process for students with disabilities to move into the university or into the work place.

The second goal was to disseminate a guide describing this model program, including its evaluation, to public, urban, postsecondary settings in the United States.

CHARACTERISTICS

...OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Open door admission policies, geographic proximity and reduced tuition costs make the community college setting attractive to students with disabilities. Of the 890,000 students with disabilities in higher education institutions in 1992-93, approximately 683,000 or 63 percent were enrolled in two year colleges (Figure 1).[2] Despite the fact that more than 9% of freshmen report having disabilities, only 1-3 percent of all students request any physical or programmatic accommodations.[3] While it is the case that some students with disabilities do not require programmatic or physical accommodations, many need modification on a regular basis. Therefore, it is important that institutions make students aware of the services they provide and develop specific approaches that are tailored to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Some differences exist in the characteristics of students with disabilities who enroll in two-year public, four-year public, and four-year independent institutions. Students with disabilities who enroll in community colleges are more likely to be older, financially independent, married; they are often veterans, part time students, and/or students pursuing a bachelor's or associate's degree. At four-year public institutions, the characteristics of undergraduate students with disabilities are a blend of those attending the other two

[2] L. Barnett, Services for Students with Disabilities in Community Colleges: Final Report, (Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, 1993), 16.
[3] C. Henderson, College Freshmen with Disabilities: A Triennial Statistical Profile, (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1995), 1.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 1
Distribution of Students with Disabilities in Public Institutions of Higher Education

Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study 1992-93 Survey, National Center for Education Statistics; also Community College Services for Students with Disabilities, AACC Survey, 1995.

major types of higher education institutions. The majority of these students attend full time, are financially independent, are single, and/or are interested in graduate work. A higher proportion of undergraduate students with disabilities who attend four-year independent colleges and universities (compared with students with disabilities in four-year public institutions) are students of color and/or receive financial aid.[4]

Undergraduate students with disabilities and those without disabilities exhibit no important differences in enrollment status, financial aid, major fields of study or degree aspirations. However, 1992-93 data from the U.S. Department of Education (Figure 1) show that students with disabilities are different from those without disabilities in several other ways.[5] In 1993:

- One in six of these students (16 percent) reported more than one disability.
- More were likely to be 35 years of age or older (36 percent vs. 19 percent).
- Because they were older, more were likely to be financially independent (67 per cent vs. 51 per cent); married (33 percent vs. 27 percent) and/or veterans (17 percent vs. 7 percent).
- More were male (53 percent vs. 44 percent).
- More were White (81 percent vs. 75 percent).
- More had completed a remedial course (20 percent vs. 13 percent).
- More were enrolled at colleges where they paid 500 dollars or less per semester for tuition (43 percent vs. 35 percent).

The most prevalent disabilities in the 1990s include health or speech impairments, low vision, hearing loss, and learning disabilities (LD) (Table 1). These contrast with the more obvious disabilities such as deafness, blindness, and orthopedic impairments, and therefore can be difficult to identify.

In most institutions the largest population of students

[4] C. Henderson, *Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Where Are They Enrolled?* Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1995), 10
[5] US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NPSAS 92-93 Survey, Data Analysis System, 1995.

with disabilities is learning disabled (frequently 60% of the total disabled student population). As a result, this model will provide additional information about issues related to LD students and their success in college. A learning disability, is a hidden disability. Unlike the person who uses a sign language interpreter, or a wheelchair, the learning disabled person shows no visible signs of the disability. The casual observer will not realize the learning disabled person copes differently from others in learning and living situations. Difficulty in processing information influences the person's performance. For example, a learning disabled student who thinks logically and clearly may nonetheless be physically unable to write out a simple paragraph. In fact, one of the characteristics of learning disabilities is inconsistency of performance. Repeated failure in school often leads to low self-esteem. Therefore, feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, and frustration are not uncommon among LD adults. LD adults have normal or above normal intelligence, a factor which helps many devise extraordinary coping mechanisms to hide or compensate the disability.

Some colleges and universities admit LD students under their regular admissions process which may be either by "open enrollment" or selective procedure. Many campuses have some sort of support services and/or tutoring available to students. While there is no special program for LD students, those who need adaptations, auxiliary aides, or tutoring should contact the Disabled Student Services Office on campus. Appropriate accommodations can be arranged, such as, instructors could agree to let students tape lectures or allow untimed exams.

The need for assessment and the provision of appropriate accommodations for LD students is crucial to their success in higher education. By providing an atmosphere of support and by teaching students skills to maximize their success, they are prepared for further learning and employment. The following is information on two issues particularly related to students with learning disabilities; ability to benefit and one on one tutoring.

Table 1
Percentage of College Students Reporting Disabilities, by Type of Disability and Level of Enrollment: 1992-93

	Undergraduate		Graduate and First-Professional	
Disability	Any Disability	Type of Disability	Any Disability	Type of Disability
Orthopedic	2.4	37	1.5	36
Health-related	1.5	23	0.8	21
Hearing	1.3	20	1.0	25
Learning	1.2	18	0.4	10
Sight	0.7	11	0.7	17
Speech	0.4	7	0.3	7
Total	6.4		4.0	
Number*	802,548		78,056	

*Estimated
Note: For example, 2.4 percent of all undergraduates reported an orthopedic disability. Of those with disabilities, 37 percent had an orthopedic condition. The total percentage of undergraduates reporting any disability (6.4 percent) is an unduplicated count. However, the types of disabilities total more than 100 percent because some students reported more than one condition.
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NPSAS 1992-93 survey, Data Analysis System, 1995.

Clearly, LD students' ability to benefit from college and university programs depends in part, at least, on their access to support services. In many states the open door policy allows anyone who is interested the opportunity to enroll. However, one of the problems plaguing students with disabilities using this admission opportunity, is that they end up caught in remedial classes. Unfortunately, many institutions do not provide adequate support services to assist these students to successfully complete remedial classes. One common method of providing remedial instruction is computer labs. Some LD students may have difficulty due to the nature of their learning disability succeeding with computer instruction alone. They may progress faster using the computer supplemented by a tutor. In many cases if these support services are not provided, students show little or no improvement and will eventually drop-out.

While some community colleges provide remedial training in the form of tutoring, this may not be as true for many universities. When students leave community colleges, they may expect the same services at a university. However many universities see tutoring as a service they are not required to provide. The argument from colleges and universities is that all they are required to do is make their facilities and program's accessible. They are not obliged to provide tutoring because it is not directly related to access.

STUDENT SURVEYS

In order to assess the needs for improving services, students with disabilities were surveyed. Surveys were administered two consecutive years and results were used to design interventions.

The survey included two sections. The first was an Enrolled Student Survey previously developed by MDCC's Institutional Research office, designed to measure the relative value of and students' satisfaction with a variety of student services. MDCC administered the survey to a 5% random sample of the general student population. The results provided a baseline against which to compare disabled student responses to identical items on the collegewide survey of randomly selected students.

The second section was developed to measure the importance of, and satisfaction with, services offered by MDCC's North Campus Disabled Student Services (DSS) Department and other support service areas. Items regarding the services were formatted in the same manner as the first section to maintain consistency. Additional items were included regarding frequency of visits to the Disabled Student Services department, frequency of equipment use, and perceived educational opportunities.

Ratings of services which were considered most important were compared by examining the percent of agreement between the two populations on the items " I believe the ideal college should have...". The five items which received the highest percent of strongly agree and agree responses from students with disabilities were:

86% An excellent job placement program
84% A financial aid program that helps make college affordable
84% Excellent athletic recreational facilities
82% Adequate transportation to and from the campus
81% An advising program focused on the students academic needs.

Among the general student body the five highest were:

91% A library that meets students' needs
91% Faculty members who are excellent teachers
91% Faculty who are up to date in their fields
91% A flexible schedule of courses at a variety of times
91% A financial aid program that helps make college affordable.

Two of the services receiving the highest ratings by students with disabilities, "adequate transportation" and "excellent athletic/recreational" facilities ranked among the five lowest for the general student population. Clearly, the perceived needs of these student populations are different.

DISABILITY LAWS

. . . AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

There are three laws which ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities: the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is essential that key college and university personnel develop expertise in all these laws. Knowledge of the legal framework within which services to students with disabilities must be provided is of vital financial as well as academic importance. After all, these laws constitute the mandates under which postsecondary education operates; therefore, institutions cannot afford to ignore the implications of these laws. All three are outlined below, with emphasis on the Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, which has the largest impact on colleges and universities.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) OF 1990

An individual with a disability is defined as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities; or (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. The Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination solely on the basis of disability in employment, public services, and accommodations. The person must be otherwise qualified for the program, service, or job. Limited tax credits for removing architectural or transportation barriers are available. Also, many federal agencies provide grant funds to train and provide technical assistance to public and private institutions.

The ADA details administrative requirements, complaint procedures, and the consequences for noncompliance related to both services and employment. The ADA requires provision of reasonable accommodations for eligible students across educational activities and settings. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the redesigning of equipment, the assigning of aides, the provision of written communication in alternative formats, the modification of tests, the redesigning of services to accessible locations, the altering of existing facilities, and the adherence to accessibility guidelines for new facilities.

People with disabilities have the same remedies that are available under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991. Thus, individuals who are discriminated against may file a complaint with the relevant federal agency or sue in federal court. Enforcement agencies encourage informal mediation and voluntary compliance.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides federal financial assistance to state and local education agencies to guarantee special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities. This law governs how students are treated in elementary and high school. It places the burden of meeting student needs on the school system and requires the development of individualized plans for each eligible child each year. Substantial federal and state allocations for mandated services to qualified students with disabilities are available to the school.

This act is relevant to postsecondary institutions because it creates expectations from students and parents about how the needs of incoming college students with disabilities will be met. While it is not

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

important that colleges understand IDEA in detail, it is important to understand how different IDEA is from either the ADA or Section 504: Section 504 requires that postsecondary institutions must ensure that their practices meet legal requirements. It is up to each individual student to file a complaint if his/her civil rights have been violated. Under IDEA, service provision is the responsibility of the school. A multi-disciplinary team determines which children (between the ages of 3 and 21) are eligible to receive special education and related service. The 13 specific categories of disability include autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairments, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs, public and private, that receive federal financial assistance. Section 504 covers institutions regardless of whether they have open door, selective or competitive admissions practices.

Any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment can qualify for coverage under this law. Major life activities include walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF SECTION 504

Although no brief overview can substitute for a careful study of Section 504 regulations, we can discuss three of the most the substantial implications of this law for higher education.

Firstly, institutions are now required to make all programs and services physically accessible to all students. This requirement means that students with disabilities must be able to participate fully in laboratory work and field study and to benefit from library services, athletic programs and residence life. Program accessibility may be achieved by relocating classes, offering services in alternate locations, modifying buildings, and so on.

Secondly, institutions are now responsible for providing auxiliary aids, such as readers, notetakers and appropriate equipment to ensure the participation of students with disabilities in college classes and activities.

Thirdly, institutions must accommodate the academic participation of qualified students with disabilities. Accommodations may include adapting the way a course is taught, allowing the student to substitute certain course requirements, or adapting testing and assessment procedures for students with disabilities where a need is indicated.

Section 504 is applicable to all postsecondary educational programs and activities which receive federal financial assistance. In brief, colleges and universities must be free from discrimination in their recruitment, admissions, and treatment of students. Under the provisions of Section 504, a college or university may not:

- Limit the number of students with disabilities admitted
- Make pre-admission inquiries as to whether or not an applicant has a disability. (An exception is permitted if the institution is trying to overcome the effects of prior limitations on enrollment of students with disabilities and an applicant is willing to provide information about his/her disability)
- Use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic level of visually impaired, hearing impaired, or otherwise disabled applicants because special provisions were not made for them
- Exclude a student with a disability from any course of study solely on the basis of his/her disability
- Counsel students with disabilities towards a more restrictive career than non-disabled students, unless such counsel is based on strict licensing or certification requirements in a profession
- Measure student achievement using modes that adversely discriminate against students with disabilities

- Institute prohibitive rules (such as the barring of tape recorders or other auxiliary aids) that may adversely affect the performance of students with disabilities

Based on the provisions of Section 504, colleges and universities could be required to:

- Extend the time permitted for a student with a disability to earn a degree
- Modify teaching methods and examinations to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- Develop course substitutions or waivers for students with disabilities
- Assure the availability of such learning aids as tape players and word processors for students with disabilities

Given these provisions, postsecondary institutions may determine policy on who they will and will not serve. To do this, the institution will need to determine what it will and will not accept to document disability in order to authorize services. It becomes clear then that it is important for institutions to develop policies and establish required documentation to access services.

THE FIRST STEP:

SETTING UP AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Clearly, to comply with the disability laws, institutions should consider reviewing existing programs and services. The first step in achieving this goal involves creating an advisory committee. The composition of the committee should be as diverse as possible, including not only the ADA and Disabled Student Services coordinators but also administrators, faculty, staff, students with disabilities, and community agencies. Developing programs and services for special populations should be a campus-wide effort and not exclusively the purview of Disabled Student Services Departments. Several benefits will be reaped from extending committee participation to administrators, faculty, and staff members from as many departments in the college as possible. Members will identify areas of concern and share ownership in the solutions proposed. As they learn about access and the situations of students with disabilities, these representatives might begin to educate others in their respective areas about such issues. This might in turn encourage a willingness on the part of represented departments to support the implementation of changes. Additionally, members can represent the disability concerns of this committee on other committees on which they serve. This representation can be helpful in areas such as new college construction and others. Such membership will ensure the college that resources will be conserved, services will not be duplicated, and students will be served in all areas.

In addition, collaboration with community agencies will not only allow for informed policy development but also provide some of the much needed support. For instance, the public schools system can assist institutions by providing referrals. Vocational Rehabilitation Services may provide funding for student tuition and/or books and supplies as well as provide testing for learning disabilities.

Business involvement in such a committee will also prove beneficial. Since local businesses naturally have a great deal to contribute to issues of career development, business members can be instrumental in developing effective educational programs. In turn, they will benefit from involvement by having access to information about ADA regulations, the typical low cost of job accommodations, and the existence of students with disabilities as sources of under-utilized labor.

For additional information about employment issues please see the Career Exploration and Advisement / Counseling sections.

MOVING FORWARD:

PROVIDING SUPPORT SERVICES

Before providing some ideas about organizing support services, there are some philosophical points that deserve attention. As do all other students, students with disabilities must meet the college's required academic standards. If school systems are graduating some students with disabilities who are unable to make effective decisions for themselves and who have unrealistic expectations about the amount of help they will receive at college, we must strive to correct these misconceptions. We cannot afford to perpetuate the ideas they bring with them. However, this does not mean that we have to be inflexible. Instead it means that we need to create an environment that expects students with disabilities to take responsibility for their education, to complete their work and to develop a capacity for independent action that many will lack when they arrive.

A DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES (DSS) DEPARTMENT

The core of any effective service delivery system for students with disabilities are the disabled student services departments. Such departments are responsible for helping students with disabilities to gain access to college programs. They are not responsible for guaranteeing success in college. If we accept this philosophy as primary and paramount, we can begin to understand many of the elements that will be described in the following sections. With this in mind, it is also important to recognize a DSS department cannot bear the entire responsibility for interacting with students with disabilities. Every department and every service provided by the college should be required to look at how well it accommodates students with disabilities. Just as the courts have held that "separate but equal" education for African-American students is not allowed, so they have ruled that students with disabilities have a right to expect services be delivered "in the most integrated setting possible" (ADA 1990). This is an important concept.

Colleges should make it clear to their faculty and administration that each and every employee must be involved in creating appropriate access for students with disabilities. For example, in an ideal environment, arrangements for special accommodations are made between the professor and the student. The disabled student services department should not be involved at all except insofar as it provides verification of a student's disability and documentation of the kinds of accommodations that are appropriate. Extra time in testing and other special requirements are worked out between teacher and student. When this happens, the student is empowered to make arrangements with which he or she is comfortable and the professor has dealt directly with the student.

SHAPING A DSS DEPARTMENT

The college needs to consider a whole range of factors when making decisions about how to provide services to students who are disabled. First and foremost, the college needs to recognize that effective service delivery depends fundamentally on the quality of the personnel that is hired. Particular care needs to be taken in recruiting someone to coordinate services to students who are disabled. This may seem like an obvious statement. However, many colleges, faced with an increasing enrollment of students with disabilities, have simply added the task of coordinating and developing student services to someone's job description. Further, the individual may not be equipped to design and implement an effective model for students with disabilities. Clearly, such an approach creates problems because personnel is not recruited based on

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

expertise; instead, they are expected to become experts overnight. The institution must make it a priority to deliver quality services to students who are disabled, develop standards and policies to keep the college out of court, as well as, hire a qualified coordinator of services for students with disabilities.

No institution should hire a person with a disability for this position because of a mistaken belief that the disability creates knowledge that can overshadow the person's lack of experience. However, a person with a disability *who has the requisite experience and background* can often act as a role model for faculty and staff and can also often motivate students more effectively than can a person who is not disabled.

In addition, where possible, it may be best to separate the functions of disabled student services coordinator from those of ADA coordinator. The responsibilities and loyalties that these two positions often create conflict. The importance of hiring an informed, qualified professional as DSS coordinator cannot be stressed enough.

More and more court cases are being decided by how carefully the institution has set up policies that apply across the board or how well students with disabilities have been made aware of guidelines upon enrolling. An institution can be saved a lot of grief in court if it makes it a priority to develop and endorse college-wide policies that cover admission, testing, course substitution (if any), the provision of auxiliary aids and services and student responsibilities. There has been a good deal of discussion lately about two concepts: "ability to benefit" and "otherwise qualified student with a disability". It's important that an institution deal with both of these concepts and arrive at positions that all levels of the institution understand and accept. The key to avoiding litigation or winning court cases is having clearly articulated policies that are widely understood and distributed.

The Disabled Student Services Office needs to utilize state and federal law to determine who is eligible to receive services. This involves first, researching state and federal mandates and then developing institutional policy. Second, the department needs to determine what documentation it will accept to verify disability status.

upport services can include but are not limited to: admissions assistance, specialized campus orientation, educational guidance, academic and vocational counseling, specialized test taking accommodations, course substitutions and waivers, tutoring, use of specialized equipment, readers, text books or tapes, Braille and large print materials, talking calculators, spell checkers, computerized note taking devices, electronic reading machines, sign language interpreters, assistive devices, telecommunication devices (TDDs), note taking services, adaptive keyboards, accessible work stations and special parking privileges. The mix of these services will depend on student needs. Virtually all departments will have to provide each of the following service components.

NOTE TAKERS AND READERS

Students who are orthopedically, learning disabled and deaf may require notetakers and/or readers. There appear to be two models for the delivery of this service.

One model suggests that the most appropriate and cost-effective way to deliver this service is by recruiting volunteers within classes who will share their notes with students with disabilities. This model sometimes includes the provision of carbon paper to the notetaker. Sometimes the volunteer is asked to bring the notes to the disabled student services area so they can be copied. The major advantage of this approach, of course, is cost. There are several disadvantages, however. Most significant is the fact that the students who are taking notes are under no obligation to continue to do it. At any time, such students can simply stop making their notes available. Almost equally difficult is how such notetakers are chosen. Volunteers are not necessarily good notetakers. Even if professors are consulted before the volunteer is chosen, there is no guarantee that there will be any standardization from class to class in terms of what is included in the notes or of how the notetaker and student will interact. Besides, the student is left hanging if the volunteer is absent or drops the class. There is also a real issue of whether the college is meeting its legal requirements by using volunteers, particularly if it is a public rather than a private college.
The other model involves the hiring of students either from the class or outside of it to take notes. This is the

approach taken by Miami-Dade Community College. Although this model costs substantially more than the volunteer approach, it provides more control of both the quality and the standardization of notes, and it allows for the establishment of clear expectations of both the notetaker and the student. The following paragraphs describe how Miami-Dade has implemented this model. At Miami-Dade, each student who wishes to work as a notetaker must first take a standard test. This involves watching a video of fifteen minutes and taking notes.

If they wish to be readers, they must tape a document which is challenging to vocalize. Students interested in working as notetakers are required to have completed certain English and Math classes successfully. A training workshop for notetakers and readers is held each semester to assure standardization of approach. It is also important to note that students with disabilities are required to evaluate their notetakers each semester. This way problems can be identified. Since MDCC pays minimum wage for these services, it is often difficult to recruit good notetakers. We have chosen to work with the honor society on campus so that we can recruit students with real ability who, presumably, are working as much for the satisfaction as for the money.

Notetakers and readers are overseen by a person in our department called the technical assistance specialist. In addition to handling training and recruiting of notetakers and readers, this individual is responsible for making sure that appropriate classroom changes are made to accommodate participants with disabilities. These accommodations might include installing speech or large print access in a lab, making certain that accessible desks are located in appropriate classrooms, or moving closed circuit tv magnifiers so they are available to the student in the classroom. The technical assistance specialist also trains students to use access technology equipment available through the department. The other major part of the responsibility of this job consists of making testing accessible.

TEST-TAKING ACCOMMODATIONS

A few words need to be said about this process. It is best if a student and an instructor can come to some agreement about how testing should be handled.

According to the law, each individual student is entitled only to those specific testing accommodations that are documentable by his or her disability. Each student is supposed to be evaluated to establish what the appropriate accommodations might be. Since there is no required standard testing format, in practice, these decisions are made using a set of guidelines that, while not perhaps perfect, give a department that is usually under-staffed at least a chance of keeping its head above water. These guidelines involve evaluating the student documentation that is available and arriving at a decision that sets out some approximation of what kind of assistance is justifiable. What is often involved is discussion with the student about the accommodations that he or she has had in the past.

At this stage, testing accommodation is not an exact science. In general, it is better to accommodate less than more. There is no way that we can guarantee that the accommodations that we provide will be the same as those which will be available at another college. Therefore, it is important to consider that if we train a student to depend on accommodations that may not be available later, the student may eventually fail in his/her educational pursuits.

Proctoring tests is another major issue. At MDCC, the testing department proctors all testing that just involves time and the use of a computer. Consequently, the only proctoring the disabled student services department does is for students who require complex testing accommodations. Deaf students pose special testing problems. The deaf student needs some opportunity to have elements of tests presented in sign language. This means interpreter time. Interpreters are expensive and usually very busy. It is usually best to let interpreters, deaf students and the instructor cooperate to determine when and how classroom testing will occur.

ACCESS TECHNOLOGY

Another service that is essential for students with disabilities is access technology. Students who are blind, learning disabled, or orthopedically disabled have special needs for technology. Access to such technology should be provided to the student in the most integrated setting possible. If it can be arranged, there-

fore, access should be made available in the classroom itself or in the computer lab. However, this is not always possible, especially if the access tool that is required is expensive or difficult to operate. In these instances, it is often best for students to use the tools they need in the disabled student services area. Because access technology might be difficult to use, someone in the disabled student services area should have some expertise in access technology or the institution must make someone within the computer area responsible for learning about this technology. It is unrealistic to assume that a student with a disability will automatically have expertise in access technology. However, perhaps a disabled student can be hired to provide training or to do simple installations.

It is important to recognize that investing in access technology can actually result in saving the institution money over the long term. There will be initial training costs for students so they may learn to use adaptive technology. Since many computerized word processors include grammar checking and spell checking, writing becomes much easier for students with learning disabilities and as a result, the "need" for tutorial services decreases. A single purchase for access technology often replaces more costly ongoing expenditures for service personnel. More important than this is the independence access technology creates for students. Many students are more comfortable scanning their own materials when they want to rather than waiting for a reader to be available. Besides, when this technology is made available in classrooms or mainstream labs, it has the additional benefit of challenging the stereotypes held by students and teachers alike about the capabilities of students with disabilities.

Additionally, it must be stressed that there is a legal obligation to make technology purchased at every institution accessible to *all* students. There must be a concerted effort on the part of the institution to make sure that new technology does not exclude students with disabilities. If an institution installs touch screens for registration or provides Internet access, some stations must be accessible to students in wheel chairs as well as blind or visually impaired students. Equally, access should be provided in local area networks set up by individual departments or labs. Private colleges and universities are not nearly so constrained in this area as public universities. Private colleges do have an obligation to assure that all services be available to students with disabilities; nevertheless, they can look to low cost options to provide these services. It would probably be acceptable, for instance, for a private college to have a person help a blind student handle the touch screen for registration. A public university, on the other hand, has considerably more responsibility in this matter, pursuant to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act which has been extended to all states.

The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act Amendments of 1994 (P.L. 103-218), commonly referred to as the Tech Act provide valuable resources to educators in all 50 states.

Tech Act projects can assist individuals with disabilities of all ages obtain and access assistive technology devices and services through systems change and advocacy efforts.

Examples of services these projects provide include:

- Information and referral services
- Demonstration centers where individuals can test equipment
- Training for service providers, parents and consumers
- Equipment exchange and recycling programs
- Mobile van outreach centers

There are 56 assistive technology projects funded to date. In order to obtain information about the project in a particular state, an institution can contact RESNA at 1-703-524-6686.

LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY

In a recent Office of Civil Rights case (OCR Case Docket No.. 09-95-2056) February 7, 1997, relating to provision of library materials to students with disabilities in public educational institutions receiving Federal financial assistance, it was ruled that any resources the library makes available to nondisabled students must be made accessible to students with disabilities. This includes the library catalogue, the archived microfiche, daily newspapers and the Internet (if that is a service provided to nondisabled patrons). This ruling was derived from both Section 504 and Title II, and the implementing regula-

tions. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires a public college to take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with persons with disabilities "are as effective as communications with others."

Many college libraries need to continue to make improvements in the accessibility of their services. Libraries should provide a minimum of one accessible workstation for students with disabilities. These workstations should include computers with VGA monitors, that operate in both DOS and Windows environments, speech synthesizer, screen access programs such as Vocal Eyes and Window Eyes for Windows and large print access should be available to students with disabilities. It is also important to provide a method of training for students on these technologies. Initial training may be provided by disabled student services' professionals.

In order to make these resources available to all students, it is not only necessary to have accessible workstations within postsecondary libraries but is also crucial to make databases and information sources accessible.

Florida is providing library accessibility through the College Center for Library Automation (CCLA), created by the Florida Legislature. The Center's goal is to provide state-wide access to shared library resources. This access is available via the Library Information Network for Community Colleges (LINCC), an automated information system that connects Florida's 28 community colleges and their associated 60 campus libraries in 46 cities. Through LINCC information gateway users can also access the Internet and electronic services such as encyclopedias, indexes and specialty databases, all of which are updated on a continual basis. This world of electronic information is available to Florida's nearly one million community college students and faculty at the touch of a computer key. LINCC provides reciprocal on-line access to LUIS (the on-line catalog of the State University System) and to LION (the State Library of Florida catalog). CCLA will add to other library catalogs on a continuing basis.

Last year, the Florida legislature allocated almost half a million dollars to create access in each of the community college's libraries for students with disabilities. Some libraries in the country have added scanners to enable students to use print books and Braille printers. Discussions are currently under way at the national level to create and maintain a repository of electronic books and experiments are already under way to demonstrate the feasibility and security of providing digitized, real audio versions of books on the World Wide Web. These cutting-edge developments will fundamentally change students with disabilities access to information. College and university libraries must be ready to take full advantage of the range of new possibilities for this country's students with disabilities.

Postsecondary institutions should be proactive and encourage both state legislatures and library associations to make accessibility a priority.

ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT IN THE DSS DEPARTMENT

Whether advisement of students with disabilities should be handled through regular channels or through DSS Departments depends on the institution and the stage in the student's academic career. Institutions might consider providing initial advisement through the disabled student services area. The main advantage of handling some advisement within the DSS department is that students with disabilities can avoid, at least initially, teachers who are uncomfortable dealing with them. Training can provide faculty with the skills and resources to advise students with disabilities, thus facilitating their acceptance of such students.

TUTORIAL SERVICES

The question of whether tutoring should be provided by an institution is difficult to answer categorically. Since tutoring is not required to assure that students who are disabled have access to college classes, it is not absolutely mandated by either Section 504 or the ADA. However, some court decisions have held that, at the time the admission decision is made, a college has a responsibility for a student's success that may include requiring tutoring if the college is aware that the student will need that service to succeed. Additionally, many institutions provide tutoring for students who are under-prepared for college. These ser-

vices are particularly common in community colleges where vocational programs at the certificate level are offered. At the very least, such tutoring must be made as accessible to students with disabilities as it is for students without them. Many such institutions are moving toward tutoring that is computer-based. This poses serious problems for students with disabilities. Given the poor self-esteem and difficulty with independent concentration that often characterize students with learning disabilities, a reliance on computers is usually not as effective an approach as tutoring. The use of peer tutors from among the student population is also typically not successful. This is because students with learning disabilities need intervention that is specifically designed to build on their learning strengths and help them learn to circumvent their learning deficits.

The model that is used at MDCC North prescribes the hiring of tutors who, at a minimum, have a bachelor's degree with some specialization in learning disability. These tutors are specifically trained to maximize the learning of disabled students. To receive this kind of assistance, students must register and pay for a class, thus offsetting the cost of hiring quality tutors. Emphasis in the Disabled Student Services Learning Center is on generalized solutions to learning problems. Traditional tutoring is provided but the intent of the DSS Center is to help students improve their ability to learn. If the Center is successful, students will need its services less and less as they progress through their college careers.

In summary, designing tutorial services, institutions should take care not to create and foster dependency among students with disabilities. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that while computers are valuable as adjuncts to human intervention, they do not work well by themselves. With appropriate tutorial services, students with disabilities are much more likely to do well at college.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is an area that lends itself well to mainstreaming. In recent years, postsecondary institutions have improved their recruitment of minorities. As people with disabilities have become the largest minority population (49 million), it is important to inform these potential students of the programs and services available in college today. The following are some practical suggestions for including students with disabilities in college recruitment efforts.

EXISTING RECRUITMENT OFFICE

For many years recruitment of students with disabilities into college has been neglected or handled exclusively by disabled student services offices. However, as mainstream recruitment offices have developed the ability to serve many other special needs populations, it is not unrealistic to expect them to include students with disabilities in their efforts. This approach would benefit not only students but also the institution. Recruitment efforts would not be duplicated and use of personnel would be maximized.

TRANSITION SPECIALISTS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

The first step toward getting public school involvement is working with the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) departments, specifically with personnel who may be designated as transition specialists. These specialists are usually directly involved with the legally mandated effort to plan what students will do once they leave school. Specialists can also help identify students interested in postsecondary education and can be a direct link between higher education institutions and graduating students.

COLLEGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

High school career exploration/college assistance centers should be contacted to determine whether they serve students with disabilities. Since many students with disabilities are isolated within special education areas in high schools, mainstream college recruiters may not see the need to include these students in their efforts. They often wrongly assume the special education people are providing college counseling, and in the end students may not be provided any information at all.

PROVIDE PARENTS COLLEGE INFORMATION

In the not-so-distant past, college was rarely an option for students with disabilities. Unfortunately, as a result of cultural and societal biases, some people still believe this is the case. For example, many parents are not aware of the variety of support services available in postsecondary settings today, services which will no longer seclude students with disabilities from their non-disabled peers and allow them to compete and learn in the mainstream environment. In light of this, a concerted effort to inform parents of the academic opportunities available for their children must be made.

There are three feasible ways of getting information to parents:

- Enlisting the support of the ESE department in the public schools by having them mail out material about programs and services available in the postsecondary institution
- Requesting lists from public schools with information on potential students (Sometimes these include disability codes; however, it is important to first check local regulations on obtaining this kind of information)
- Holding specialized teleconferences for parents related to programs and services

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES

Social and community service agencies are an important link to potential students since this population

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

typically does not attend college until four or more years after graduating from high school.

Three strategies are suggested for making these agencies aware of diverse college programs and services.

First, an advisory group including the public schools, vocational rehabilitation services, blind services, deaf services and any other service agencies in the area must be formed. In this way, information on programs and services can be shared at meetings. This approach often has a positive side effect, it provides community unity and minimizes the duplication of efforts by getting interested organizations to work together.

Second, individuals such as academic advisors, financial aid or disabled student services officers already working with the agencies should provide relevant information to the agencies with whom they are involved.

Third, postsecondary institutions should hold on campus activities such as teleconferences, job fairs and workshops where students can be recruited. Adequate copies of material on the programs and services being promoted should be distributed at these workshops. Also, names and addresses and should be collected so that a mailing list for future information can be developed.

VIDEOS

Videos which describe programs and services available on campus should be considered. These provide information at a low cost and are readily available upon demand. Students don't have to wait for a specific date or time to obtain information. The videos can be made available through the institution or through the college assistance programs within the public schools. Topics should be specific enough to be relevant to student interest. Some examples are Vocational Programs for Students With Disabilities in the Community College or Support Services Available to Students With Disabilities in the University. The videos should also be no longer than 15 minutes.

RECRUITMENT MAILINGS

Many students with disabilities do not identify themselves during the registration or recruitment phase and thus do not receive information about services that would be suitable for them. A solution to this problem might be to include the Disabled Student Brochure with all other recruitment mailings. However, this may not be cost-effective. A more useful approach would be to include in these mailings a book marker (or similar enclosure) giving the Disabled Student Services Department phone number and a concise listing of services available.

THE INTERNET

Even if an institution recruits students following all the guidelines listed above, it may not reach those students with disabilities who are homebound. To reach the homebound population, the institution should:

- Mention Disabled Student Services on its Internet home page
- Provide other relevant Disabled Student Services information through the Internet
- Use television and radio to advertise support services available

Advertising and recruitment should always include information about the support services available to students with disabilities.

APPLICATION/REGISTRATION TIME

The difficulties that frequently accompany registration can be compounded by mobility problems or sensory impairments for students with disabilities. Provisions should be taken so that students with disabilities can register for classes as conveniently and efficiently as other students. It is necessary that the registration process be reviewed by the Advisory Committee (previously discussed).

Institutions, especially those with open admissions, must ensure that the services (such as sign language interpreting, or accommodations for the physically disabled) typically needed by disabled students be provided at registration. A knowledgeable admissions officer, student services representative or student should be available at all times to address problems that arise during registration.

Persons responsible for registration should be aware of any inaccessible classrooms, laboratories, and/or buildings. They also must be able to work with students to provide appropriate accommodations.

SPECIALIZED ORIENTATION

It is recommended that institutions develop specialized orientation programs which deal with matters of particular concern to students with disabilities, such as mobility, access to facilities and sources for needed support services. The process may include student handbooks, campus visits, specific orientation materials and programs to acquaint students with the institution. This orientation should be in addition to, not in place of, the general orientation, and participation should be optional, not required.

The specialized orientation program should stress self-advocacy skills. This is because many students with disabilities are accustomed to the procedures in high school, where parents and teachers served as advocates for them. However, in colleges/universities, students are responsible for themselves and must advocate for themselves. Providing students a clear understanding of their rights and *responsibilities* will prepare them to succeed in college.

Again, sessions must be held in physically accessible locations, and support services be available for students who may need accommodations during the orientation. Students should receive any handouts in accessible formats i.e.: Braille, large print and taped copies. The orientation registration form is a good place to find out about format preferences and/or needs.

In planning for the orientation it is important to pay close attention to registration dates, as well as, the beginning of term.

SELF IDENTIFICATION BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The ADA prohibits institutions from inquiring on admission materials whether a student has a disability. As a result, it is important that students self-identify to the institution. However, students with disabilities may be reluctant to self-identify. They often fail to realize that at the postsecondary level, it is their responsibility to request needed services. Therefore, it is imperative that an institution have brochures in the registration area that will lead students to the disabled student services area. A student-friendly poster at registration and at the Financial Aid office might also be helpful. All efforts should be made to assure that, even if a student chooses not to use disabled student services, he or she knows that it is available.

COPY AVAILABLE

In a majority of institutions academic advisors are often the first contact for incoming students with disabilities. Therefore, advisors should be trained to work with disabled students. If this is not possible, someone in the advisement office can specialize in this area or someone from disabled student services can be assigned to this task. In any case, it is imperative to have advisors that are aware of the needs of students with disabilities. Specifically, they should know about:

- Services available in the disabled student services office
- Substitutions for classes directly related to disability and the process for making these substitutions
- Specialized counseling services

It is crucial that these students—whether with more obvious or less obvious disabilities—be encouraged to explore interests, develop abilities, examine life choices, career options and educaticnal programs so that they can maximize their potential. As the HEATH Resource Center explains, "opportunities are expanding for postsecondary education, career options and life choices for people with disabilities."[1] Therefore, it is important that students develop and assess academic, vocational, social and personal interest potential by:

- Taking courses in many disciplines: arts, sciences, math, vocational/technical subjects
- Exploring life experiences by trying a variety of school activities, social functions, volunteer and paid jobs
- Developing personal skills such as problem solving, decision making and disability management

ENSURING NON-RESTRICTIVE CAREER COUNSELING

As previously stated, all students, including those with disabilities, need advice about career choices based on the student's interests, abilities, and skills as well as on a realistic picture of the job market. Emphasis on the following will lead to non-restrictive career counseling:

- Realistic information about employment trends in current and future job markets
- Accurate information about educational and certification requirements
- Examples of coping strategies and adaptations used by successful people with disabilities working in various careers
- Decision-making based on interest, aptitude and ability
- Access to the counseling environment

Advisors/counselors should have a positive, supportive attitude—one that focuses on the abilities and not disabilities of the student. Positive attitudes can be conveyed by:

- Making the physical environment of the advisement or counseling office accessible to disabled clients
- Publicizing information about appropriate accommodations in accessible formats such as large print or Braille

[1] HEATH Resource Center, *Strategies for Advising Disabled Students for Post-Secondary Education*, (American Council on Education, 1988), 1-2.

FINANCIAL AID

The following section is designed to provide specific information about financial aid for students with disabilities. The assumption is that the reader has a working knowledge of financial aid procedures in a postsecondary settings. This information was compiled with the assistance of the HEATH Resource Center's document *"1995 Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities."*

Funding qualifications for support services vary by state and constantly change. Therefore, it is important that staff and student services, as well as, the disabled student services department be informed about these requirements and stay abreast of any changes.

DISABILITY RELATED EXPENSES

Students with disabilities are often faced with additional expenses not incurred by other students. These may include:

- Special equipment related to the disability and its maintenance
- Expenses of services for personal use or study such as readers, interpreters, notetakers or personal care attendants
- Transportation necessary to pursue an academic program, if regular transportation is not accessible
- Medical expenses relating directly to the individual's disability that are not covered by insurance

At least some of the expense for the above-listed items may be covered by financial aid; therefore, financial aid officers should be aware of regulations regarding disability-related assistance. For example, the officers should know the type of documentation required for a disability-related expense. It is also necessary that they know that some special equipment and support services may be available through the institution's disabled student services department and therefore not covered by financial aid.

Regardless of where the student is able to obtain any special equipment, the financial aid officer needs to be aware of these anticipated expenses since such information will be used to qualify the student for financial aid.

SPECIAL FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

Assistance to students with disabilities is often provided by state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies. In some states there are two agencies: a general agency and one for persons who are blind or visually impaired. The local VR agency has counselors who can help a person with a disability determine eligibility for assistance. Qualification for assistance requires that an individual must have an impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment. The primary goal of a VR counselor is to assist the client in becoming employed. The counselor looks closely at a student's educational plans in terms of job potential.

Florida's, VR provides assistance in the following areas:

- Tuition expenses
- Reader services
- Interpreter services
- Telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices
- Other goods and services which enable a client to work

The above items differ from state to state. Each state administers its own program under the guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act.

Most states have developed working agreements between state associations of financial aid officers and VR. They allow for a coordinated effort in providing

HEATH Resource Center, *1995 Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities*, (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1995), 6-7.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

funds for disabled college students. Students served by VR are required to apply for student financial aid under the guidelines of the Vocational Rehabilitation Financial Aid Cooperative Agreements.

Many students with disabilities are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Social Security funds made available to people with disabilities who have minimal income and are not working full time. Care should be taken when making financial aid decisions to assure that the student's SSI is not compromised by financial aid provided through the institution. Sometimes Work Study can pose problems for students on SSI.

PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SELF SUPPORT (PASS)

The Social Security Administration provides a program called Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS). PASS was implemented in the 1970s and is only utilized by about 1% of those eligible. Anyone who has a certified disability, is 16 or older, and has a gross family income less than $57,000 a year is eligible for PASS dollars. The program assists disabled people acquire services or items needed for education or employment. Monies are provided for educational training programs/tuition, transportation, medical necessities, and other needs.

PASS funding is not affected by benefits such as worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, SSI, alimony, disability veterans benefits, or by any wages earned.

PASS can be promoted in postsecondary settings to students with disabilities. However, it is important that the institution guard against using the dollars for services they are required to provide under the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, it is important to realize PASS is restrictive. There are limits on the amount and time an individual can receive PASS dollars.

MENTORSHIP

It has already been mentioned that students with disabilities enter postsecondary education more academically unprepared than their peers. In addition, as a result of being secluded from mainstream peers into special education departments in high school, they are less likely to have participated in extra-curricular activities. Also, these students are less likely to have held a job or had a date. So that in addition to their already existing disability, their lack of experience in these areas often puts them at a disadvantage in college and the work world.

To ease some of these difficulties, CARE developed a mentorship program through which students with disabilities worked with peers on individual issues, such as participation in extra-curricular activities and career exploration. Not only did the students with disabilities benefit but so did the mentors by becoming aware of this population's needs and abilities.

The ultimate goal of the mentorship program was to increase students retention. Increased self-esteem and participation in both on and off campus activities were positive outcomes as well. Students in different institutions may have other needs, or institutions may determine different goals based on institutional objectives.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CAREER EXPLORATION/ JOB PLACEMENT

Career Exploration and Job Placement offices should be prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In the not-so-distant past, students with disabilities did not attend college and as a result have no need for these offices. Now, in addition to the education and training students with disabilities receive in our institutions, we need to provide part-time, summer employment, and job shadowing opportunities for them, as well as, for all students.

Students sometimes underestimate their ability to accomplish a task. Lacking information about the requirements of specific occupations or training available in postsecondary settings, they may unnecessarily rule out certain jobs. Career exploration counselors may help them re-evaluate their options by providing information regarding various occupations the students might not have contemplated before. Clearly, students with disabilities need to be encouraged to consider occupations they might have previously disregarded. Therefore, personnel who are approachable and sensitive are a critical component to the success of students with disabilities.

Again it is important to stress that Job Placement/ Career Exploration offices be accessible to students with disabilities. While the up-front costs of training will be higher over the long term, it is more cost-effective to have appropriate equipment available than to have personnel assisting the students with disabilities, with tasks they could complete themselves.

A variety of Job Placement/Career Exploration access technology is available. The most prudent strategy is to have at least one accessible work station suitable for a variety of disabilities. Such a station might include a screen reading system for the blind, large print for the visually impaired, and a TDD for the deaf. Work stations should be accessible and usable for people in wheelchairs. There are a number of freeware programs to create "sticky fingers" that allow students with mobility impairments to handle computer commands one keystroke at a time. There is also interest inventory software which narrows the scope of possible occupations for students with disabilities. This avoids the problems created when an instrument lists for example, piloting an aircraft as an option for blind students.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FACULTY AND STAFF TRAINING

Faculty and staff should be receptive to the needs of students with disabilities. If they are not, an institutions may lose valuable enrollment and perhaps even influence some students with disabilities to give up on postsecondary education altogether. Such negative effects can be easily avoided however, with some training, faculty and staff can provide effective customer service to students with disabilities. For example, knowing simple details like whom to look at when addressing a deaf student with a sign language interpreter, or how a blind student signs official documents lessens confusion and saves time.

Clearly, faculty and staff training is the key to providing such information. One way to determine training needs is through a needs-assessment instrument distributed to faculty and staff.

In designing actual training sessions, it is important to keep in mind that faculty and staff already have pressing demands on their time, so that presentations should be relevant, useful, and concise. There are a variety of presentation formats: workshops, teleconferences, general meetings, videos, disabled student services presentations at departmental meetings.

The CARE Program provided a variety of training methods. Some techniques worked and some did not. However, the variables seemed to be institution-specific. There seems to be tremendous diversity among institutions of higher learning with regard to how training is provided. As a result, what worked for us might not work in other institutions and vice versa.

We worked through the Faculty and Staff Professional Development (FSPD) Office to be sure that such training would be institutionalized once the CARE grant is over. We provided training sessions open to all faculty and staff and designed presentations for specific academic divisions i.e.: Behavioral Studies, Vocational Education, Basic Skills Communications, Financial Aid and Student Services.

The faculty and staff training had three general objectives:

- Create and foster sensitivity for students with disabilities
- Provide information about the existing resources on campus and describe effective strategies that faculty can use to integrate students with disabilities into their classes
- Describe how to use technology to enhance integration of students with disabilities into classroom activities

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY

It is critical that institutions support faculty who cooperate with disabled student services personnel in providing authorized accommodations and support services, in a fair and timely manner, for students with disabilities.

In accordance with the ADA, faculty do not have the right to refuse to provide required accommodations, to question whether a disability exists when accommodations have been authorized by the college, or to examine a student's documentation. However, faculty members should have input into the means for providing accommodations in their particular classes. A student with a disability must be able to understand the course material and communicate that comprehension to the instructor. Support services should give the student the opportunity to achieve that outcome, so long as the accommodation does not alter the fundamental nature of the course or program.

If a faculty member has questions about the appropriateness of a required accommodation, he or she might wish to consult with the Disabled Student Services Coordinator. If a disagreement is unresolved, the faculty member should contact his or her department immediately and begin working on a solution. In the meantime, the faculty member should continue to pro-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

vide the accommodation until it is set aside or modified by authorities competent to take a legally binding decision for the institution. If the institution does not have a policy in place for appealing accommodation decisions, one should be developed. In any event, the faculty handbook or its equivalent should include a section that clearly sets out the responsibility of faculty members regarding accommodations. This would be an opportunity to include a statement that the institution and/or the faculty member could be sued if accommodations that should have been provided were not. Examples of accommodations faculty members could make according to specific disabilities are as follows.

SUGGESTED ACCOMMODATIONS:

Blind And Visually Impaired Students

To provide appropriate accommodations for blind and visually impaired students, faculty members should:

- Provide alternative test formats such as Braille, audio tape, computer disk, large print
- Read materials from overheads or blackboards rather than pointing to them
- Seat blind and visually impaired students in the front of the room
- Permit the use of tape recorders, computer notebooks or slates and styluses during lectures
- Provide a lab assistant where appropriate

Deaf And Hearing Impaired Students

To provide appropriate accommodations for deaf and hearing impaired students, faculty members should:

- Require seating in a spot that will allow a good view of the instructor, the interpreter and the blackboard
- Keep their hands and other things away from their lips
- Use captioned films and videos
- Provide handouts in advance so the deaf student can watch the interpreter during a class discussion rather than have to read new material at the same time

Students With Physical Impairments

To provide appropriate accommodations for students with mobility problems, faculty members should:

- Make sure the class meets in an accessible location
- Permit students who have difficulty writing to use notetakers during class and exams
- Provide a portable lab station for students who use wheelchairs

Learning Disabled Students

To provide appropriate accommodations for learning disabled students, faculty members should:

- Allow these students additional time on exams
- Allow spell-checkers or calculators in class and on tests
- Provide alternative testing formats such as an oral exams

CONSORTIUM

Provision of services for students with disabilities can be improved by linkages between local educational institutions. The CARE Program developed the Southeast Florida Consortium of Disabled Student Services Providers.

The Consortium included both public and private community colleges and universities from the South Florida area. By opening lines of communication between institutions, the Consortium was able to address issues including recruitment of students into postsecondary settings; development of policy on uniformity of services between institutions; and strategies to improve transfer rates to upper division institutions.

MINORITY ISSUES

Miami-Dade Community College's student population reflects that of Dade County, Florida. The college serves a population of 57% Hispanic, 21% African-American, 19% White Non-Hispanic and 3% other.[1] The college awards more Associate Degrees than any other community college in the country and the largest number of Associate Degrees to minorities (the largest to Hispanic Americans and the second largest to African-Americans).[2]

Many students with disabilities belong to these minority populations. Hence, it is imperative that programs aimed at minority populations also target the disabled within those populations. Currently much information is distributed in a variety of languages because many parents of second language students do not speak or read English. In these publications or advertisements, the public should be notified that information is available in accessible formats. For example, a statement such as the following could be included: This document is available in other formats, including a 3.5 disc, Braille, an audio cassette. To request information in one of these formats, please call 123-4567 voice/TDD.

In targeting minority students with disabilities, one strategy is to determine how the local minority communities obtain information. Are there community centers, churches or foreign language radio/television or newspapers? Institutions must be aware that minority people who are disabled are doubly disadvantaged. Within the disability community, members of minorities are significantly less successful than non-minorities with disabilities. While it is clear that there is a need to reach out to people who are disabled and members of minority populations, it is not clear how best to do this. Institutions must assure that minority recruitment, retention programs include people with disabilities. Disability outreach must be organized in order to maximize participa-

[1] Data Source: SAS Analysis of MDCC Student Data Base, Ron Vorp, CARE Evaluator

[2] Florida Association of Community Colleges, Florida's "Great 28" Lead the Nation In The Number Of Associate Degrees Conferred, (Current, Vol., 28, Issue 4, Fall 1996).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barnett, Lynn. *Disability Support Practices in Community Colleges: Selected Examples.* Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, 1993.

Services for Students with Disabilities in Community Colleges: Final Report. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, 1993.

Directory of Disability Support Services in Community Colleges 1992. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, 1992.

Council for *Communicating with Culturally Diverse Parents of* Exceptional *Children.* Exceptional Children. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, 1991. Database on-line. Available from Dialog, ERIC, ED333619.

Dart, Justin. *Fallacy and Truth About the ADA.* The Washington Post, 1995.

Florida Association Of *Florida's "Great 28" Lead The Nation In The Number Of Associate* Community Colleges. *Degrees Conferred.* Current, Vol.. 28, Issue 4, Fall 1996.

HEATH Resource Center. *1995 Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1995.

Strategies for Advising Disabled Students for Postsecondary Education. Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1989.

Henderson, Cathy. *College Freshmen with Disabilities: A Triennial Statistical Profile.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1995.

"Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: Where Are They Enrolled?" ACE Research Brief Series, Vol.. 6, No. 6. Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1995.

Laanan, Frankie Santos. *Community Colleges as Facilitators of School-to-Work.* Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community College, 1995. Database on-line. Available from Dialog, ERIC, ED 383360.

Lankard, Bettina A. *Parents and the School-to-Work Transition of Special Needs Youth.* Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1993. Database on-line. Available from Dialog, ERIC, ED 363798.

McLaughlin, Margaret J., *Using Performance on Outcomes-Based Accountability Systems.* and Warren, Sandra Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, 1995. Database on-line. Hopfengardner. Available from Dialog, ERIC, ED381987.

US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Education NPSAS 1992-93 Survey, Data Analysis System, 1995.

Vorp, Ronald. Miami-Dade Community College Office of Institutional Research, Student Database. CARE Evaluator.

Wagner, Mary. *Dropouts with Disabilities: What Do We Know? What Can We Do?* Menlo Park, CA: A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students, 1991.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RESOURCE LIST

A Desk Reference Guide for Faculty, Staff and College Students with Disabilities
Anne R. Thompson, Ph.D., Director
Leslie Bethea, M.S., Coordinator
Project PAACS
Department of Counselor Education and Educational Psychology
P.O. Box 9727
Mississippi State, MS 39762 - 5740
1(800) 582-2233 (TDD Relay System)
(601) 325-3263 (FAX)

AHEAD
Faculty Inservice Education Kit
Association on Higher Education and Disability
P.O. Box 21192
Columbus, Ohio 43221-0192
(614) 488-4972 (V/TDD)
(614) 488-1174 (FAX)

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf
202-337-5220 (Voice/TDD)

American Council of the Blind
1-800-424-8666

College Students With Disabilities
A Resource Guide for Faculty and Staff
April 1995
Virginia H. Smith
Project Coordinator
Project GATE (Gaining Access: Transition to Employment)
Calhoun Community college
P.O. Box 2216
Decatur, AL 35609-2216
(205) 306-2866 (V/TDD)
(205) 306-2885 (FAX)

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
1-800-LET-ERIC

HEATH Resource Center
1-800-544-3284

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
1-800-526-7234; 304-293-7186

National Center for Learning Disabilities
212-687-7211
703-451-2078

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities,
1-800-695-0285 (Voice/TDD);
1-202-884-8200
(Voice/TDD);1-202-884-8441 (Fax)

National Information Center on Deafness
1-800-672-6720

RESNA Inc.
703-524-6686 ext. 313

Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Regarding Students with Disabilities
Martha Wille Gregory, CEO
Coordinator
Center for Innovations in Special Education
Parkade Center, Suite 152
601 Business Loop 70 West
Columbia, MO 65211
(314) 884-7275

Spinal Cord Injury Hotline
1-800-526-3456

The American Association for the Advancement of Science
202-326-6630 (Voice/TDD)

The ADA Information Line
1-800-514-0301 (Voice);
1-800-514-0383 (TDD)

The Foundation on Employment and Disability, Inc.
310-214-3430
310-214-1413 (TDD)

The National Easter Seal Society
1-800-221-6827

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1-800-669-4000

Products developed by the CARE Grant are available including:

The CARE Program Model Booklet
Notetaker and Reader Handbook
Student Satisfaction Survey
Notetaker Assessment Form

If you would like to obtain these free documents for use in your institution please contact The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) at 614-488-4972.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE